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TAKE YOUR SHOT

May 11 12,89,175 doses

May 12 12,15,131 doses

TOTAL: 1,80,97,52,061

NATIONWIDE	May 11	May 12	KARNATAKA	May 11	May 12
Fresh cases	2,847	2,827	Fresh cases	157	157
Recoveries	2,916	3,230	Recoveries	150	216
Deaths	54	24	Deaths	01	0

MONSOON TO ARRIVE EARLY THIS YEAR, ONSET ON MAY 15

Southwest monsoon will advance into South Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay of Bengal around May 15, the IMD said

ANDAMAN BRACES FOR RAINS IN NEXT 5 DAYS

The India Meteorological Department said widespread rainfall is likely over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands during the next five days. The islands are likely to experience isolated heavy falls over the region from May 14-16. IMD said squally weather with wind speed reaching 40-60 kmph is also likely. Normally, northwest monsoon covers the entire archipelago on May 22

WELCOME RESPITE FROM HEAT WAVE

- Weather scientists said that extended range forecasts have consistently suggested favourable conditions for an early monsoon onset over Kerala and its northward movement
- Early onset of monsoon could bring cheer as most parts of the country witnessed high temperatures over the past fortnight

JUNE 1

THE NORMAL ONSET DATE FOR SOUTHWEST MONSOON OVER KERALA

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Bigger inflation shock as 7.79% exceeds forecast

April Consumer Price Index-based inflation at 8-year high; March industry output drags

MONIKA YADAV @ New Delhi

TWO sets of data released on Thursday held a mirror to the grim economic situation in the country. While retail inflation jumped to an eight-year high at 7.79% in April, in a way justifying the Reserve Bank of India's sudden move on May 4 to jack up the repo rate ahead of schedule, industrial production grew at a dismal pace of 1.9% in March. In February, the Index of Industrial production, which measures the industrial activity in the country, had showcased a growth of 1.7%.

The latest inflation shock is on the back of increase in prices of food, fuel & light, and transport and communication. Inflation in the food basket rose to 8.38% in April from 7.68% in March, data showed. The higher than expected price rise was more broad-based with miscellaneous items, fuel and light, and clothing and footwear also contributing to the inflation.

This is the fourth straight month inflation lies above the Reserve Bank of India's upper tolerance level of 6%. Back in May 2014, inflation was at 8.3% and in March 2022, it stood at 6.95%. The apex bank's task is to maintain retail inflation at 4% with a margin of 2% on either side for a five-year period ending March 2026.

Experts say the continuous rise in inflation will push RBI to further increase the interest rate by 50 basis points (bps). Recently, it had raised the repo rate by 40 bps to 4.4% and the cash reserve ratio by 50 bps to 4.5%. Owing to good growth in direct and indirect tax revenue, the Centre can opt to reduce union excise duty on petrol to contain inflation.

Higher interest rates could hit investment and growth, warns D K Srivastava, chief policy advisor at EY India. But he adds that there may be a positive spinoff as well, thanks to higher growth in taxes linked to higher nominal growth.

However, even with the upward trend in inflation, the Centre seems optimistic about its impact on low-income groups. "Evidence on consumption patterns suggests that inflation in India has a lesser impact on low-income strata than on high-income groups," the ministry said in its latest monthly review report.

Meanwhile, equity markets continued to dip over scary US inflation data with the Sensex crashing over 1,158 points and the Nifty tanking below the 16,000-level on Thursday. P13

With Ranil as PM, Gota to face no-trust vote

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

IN a dramatic turn of events, Ranil Wickremesinghe was appointed the 26th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Thursday, days after Mahinda Rajapaksa vacated the seat amid riots.

Perhaps the only factor that works for Ranil is his experience because this is his sixth term as PM. He could well go down in Sri Lankan history as the weakest PM the country ever had.

For, his United National Party (UNP) scored a duck in the 2020 parliamentary polls with Ranil, too, losing his seat. He later wormed his way into Parliament on the basis of his party's cumulative national votes.

Ranil Wickremesinghe (L) being greeted by Gotabaya Rajapaksa before the swearing-in ceremony in Colombo | AFP

Ranil's deputy Sajith Premadasa broke away from the UNP to form the Samagi Jana Balawegaya and become the main Opposition party in the country. Any interim government Ranil forms will have stability issues as each minister would assume he is no less than the PM.

It works for Gotabaya though for obvious reasons. However, the President's job is on the line as an all-party meeting decided to debate a no-confidence motion against Gotabaya in Parliament on Tuesday, May 17.

Ranil's appointment drew flak from various parties. "Wickremesinghe has no legitimacy in the current Parliament right from the beginning. He did not even win his constituency," said M A Sumanthiran, leader of the Tamil National Alliance.

"Ranil has always been the saviour of the Rajapaksa family. No citizen will accept palace conspiracies," said Anura Kumara Dissanayake, leader of the National People's Power Party and People's Liberation Front. P12

Be cautious against illegal immigrants: Cops to public

The Coastal Security Police have appealed to people to be vigilant while renting out houses, and asked them to demand relevant papers to curb illegal immigration from Sri Lanka. Mangaluru City Police chief N Shashi Kumar said on Thursday that police are also on high alert.

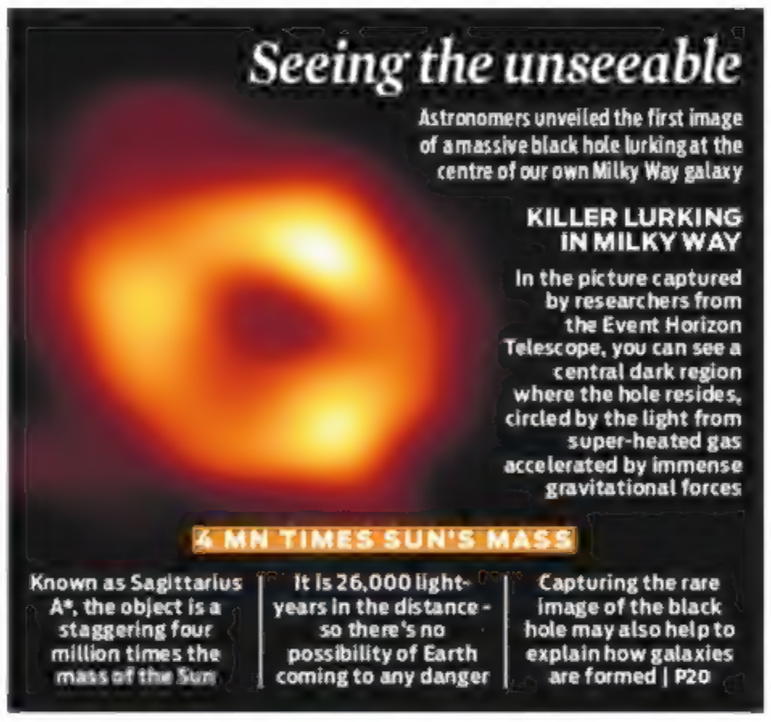
Green signal for state cyber security policy

MG CHETAN @ Bengaluru

THE state Cabinet approved the Karnataka Cyber Security Policy 2022-27 at a meeting held on Thursday. The policy aims to strengthen capabilities of the state government and the IT industry in checking increasing cases of cyber crime in the state.

The policy has been introduced as Karnataka is among the states with highest level of internet penetration in the country. The current digitisation drives are further increasing the adoption of internet technology by citizens as well as by small and big business firms. Cyber security is of utmost concern to the IT and start-up industry that is a major source of employment and investment. The policy focuses on cyber security of citizens and industry in the state and proposes strategies to enhance the general level of cyber security across all sectors.

While cyber security is a growing concern as the number of cyber attacks like hacking, ransomware and cyber frauds are on the rise, the policy proposes citizen-centric awareness drives, boosting cyber security industry, state capacity building and centralised response mechanism. It aims at addressing cyber security challenges through five pillars - building awareness, skill-building, promoting research and innovation, promotion of industry and start-ups, and collaborations for capacity building. P4


Seeing the unseeable
Astronomers unveiled the first image of a massive black hole lurking at the centre of our own Milky Way galaxy
KILLER LURKING IN MILKY WAY
In the picture captured by researchers from the Event Horizon Telescope, you can see a central dark region where the hole resides, circled by the light from super-heated gas accelerated by immense gravitational forces
4 MN TIMES SUN'S MASS
Known as Sagittarius A*, the object is a staggering four million times the mass of the Sun
It is 26,000 light-years in the distance - so there's no possibility of Earth coming to any danger
Capturing the rare image of the black hole may also help to explain how galaxies are formed | P20

GOVT TO BRING IN ANTI-CONVERSION LAW VIA ORDINANCE

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka Government on Thursday decided to bring into effect the controversial Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Bill, 2021, more commonly known as Anti-Conversion Bill, through an ordinance. The decision was taken at a state Cabinet meeting held on Thursday.

It may be recalled that amid protest from Opposition party leaders in the Assembly, the Bill was passed at the legislative session held in Belagavi in December 2021. However, the ruling BJP did not have majority in the Legislative Council and the Bill was not placed during a session of the Council held in March and April. Despite the monsoon session of the state legislature scheduled to be held in June/July this year, the government has taken the ordinance route which has raised many eyebrows.

Speaking to reporters, Law Minister JC Madhuswamy said the government could not place the Bill before the Council for "some reason" during the last couple of sessions. "This is why we are taking the ordinance route for which we have taken approval. We will not change anything in the Bill from what was passed in the Assembly. There is a provision in the Constitution that we can bring it through Ordinance if it is not passed in the Houses. We will, however, pass the Bill in the coming sessions," he said. P4

RAJIV KUMAR TO TAKE CHARGE AS NEXT CEC ON MAY 15

Kumar, former Union finance secretary and currently a member of the Election Commission of India, will oversee the 2024 Lok Sabha and various State polls | P9

Genome sequencing network will be given to neighbours: Modi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

WITH the second Global Covid-19 Summit issuing a call on Thursday to enhance efforts to control the pandemic and prepare for future health emergencies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India will extend its Genomics Consortium network to its neighbourhood.

The consortium, called INSACOG, is a multi-lab, multi-agency network to monitor genomic variations in the Covid by sentinel sequencing. It has already contributed significantly to the global database on the virus, Modi pointed out.

Speaking at the Summit, US President Joe Biden urged the world to prevent complacency and to keep their political will strong. At least $50 million of the US government's $150 million three-year pledge to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations will support Covid vaccine research in addition to the development of other vaccines and countermeasures for future emerging infectious diseases.

Germany said it will contribute Euro 50 million towards the establishment of a new global health security and pandemic preparedness fund housed at the World Bank.

Migrant workers: ₹25 cr scam hits labour dept

SHILPA P @ Bengaluru

A MAJOR scam with irregularities to the tune of ₹25.73 crore, involving inflated figures and fake vouchers showing catering done to migrant building and construction workers in Bengaluru has claimed to have been unearthed by a social activist. The number of migrant building and other construction workers has been found to be more than three-four times larger than official list drawn up by the city police chief.

A social activist filed a complaint with Lokayukta on Wednesday alleging a scam to the tune of ₹25,73,69,236 by Construction & Other Workers Welfare Board (C&OWWB) under the Labour Department. It has been alleged the perpetrators claimed to have given food kits to 2.50 lakh to 3.50 lakh migrant building and other construction workers per day. P5

SIDDU TAGS COMPLAINT COPY ON TWITTER

Congress leader Siddaramaiah tagged Rajanna's complaint copy to Lokayukta on Twitter, which says that a complaint has been filed against labour department.

EXPRESS READ

J&K govt staff killed in terror attack in office

Srinagar: In yet another targeted attack, two terrorists on Thursday barged into a government office in Budgam district of J&K and shot dead a Kashmiri Pandit staffer from close range. Rahul Bhat was a clerk in the tehsildar's office | P9

PSI scam: CID detains DySP, netas interfere

Bengaluru: CID officials on Thursday detained Deputy SP Shanthakumar in connection with the PSI recruitment scam. However, CID officials refused to confirm his detention to TNIE, and neither did DG&IGP Praveen Sood | P4

WONDERLA
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Lack of signage causes farmer's death

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

A 64-year-old farmer returning home after attending a wedding reception, suffered a fatal fall into a 15-foot underpass being constructed near Yelahanka railway station.

The contractor, carrying out the job for South Western Railway Zone, had not put up signage, barricades, sufficient lighting or any kind of intimation about the ongoing work at the spot, just 250 m from the railway station on Old Yelahanka Town side.

The body of **Munikrishnappa**, whose face was completely smashed when he fell on Sunday night, was removed by police and workers from the deep pit in the early hours of Monday (May 9). He is survived by his wife and two sons, aged 29 and 25. Work on the much-delayed Railway Under Bridge, that aims to provide connectivity between New Yelahanka Town and Old Yelahanka Town, began over a year ago and trespassing the tracks to reach the other side is a common occurrence. The senior citizen, too, appears to be one of them.

Mohan Kumar, his elder son, was staying with his parents at Venkatagiri Post in Devanahalli taluk. CONTINUED ON: P2

The under-construction underpass in Yelahanka in which the 64-year-old farmer fell to his death | S LALITHA